

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAPTER I

*Introduction**William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,
Ayelet Haimson Lushkov, and Katherine Wasdin*

This volume collects the majority of papers from a conference held at Yale University in 2007. That conference, also entitled *Reception and the Classics*, sought to define and articulate the particular role of Classics and classicists in the project of Reception Studies.¹ The field of Reception Studies ranges over a vast stretch of time and material, from classical antiquity to the present day, from literature to art, music, and film; it is thus an inherently interdisciplinary field in its encompassing of a variety of departments and disciplines, each with its own canons, practices, and shared working assumptions. This interdisciplinary practice has formed the intellectual foundation for the present collection: although Reception Studies as a field has grown in scope and energy between conference and publication, we feel that the question of where Classics stands in relation to its peer disciplines remains alive and crucial.

Even today the practitioners of classical reception are, by and large, classicists; and although some names outside our discipline, such as David Quint and Kenneth Haynes, are perhaps well known to classicists, any such familiarity generally springs from their work on explicitly classical material or from their collaborations with classical scholars.² And while many scholars rely on the classics for their own research in other fields, the work of non-classicists in this vein has often been seen not as part of a coherent discourse on the *nachleben* of Greek and Latin, but simply as accounting for the sources, cultural practice and intellectual curiosity of a Shakespeare, a Joyce, or a Petrarch, in the regular course of literary criticism. The difference between the approaches of scholars working within various institutional categories extends to more than a temporal

¹ Throughout the introduction we use “Classics” to refer to the discipline and “classics” to refer to ancient Greek and Roman works of art (usually literary).

² E.g., Quint, *Epic and Empire*, and “The Virgilian coordinates of *Paradise Lost*”; Carne-Ross and Haynes, *Horace in English*; Haynes, *English Literature and Ancient Languages*, and “Text, theory, and reception.”

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)

2 W. BROCKLISS, P. CHAUDHURI, A. HAIMSON LUSHKOV, K. WASDIN

perspective, since each department or discipline relies also on a hoard of specialized knowledge (linguistic, cultural, archival, etc.), to which outsiders are not always privy, nor do the audiences of each field overlap.

A brief account of some of the benefits and caveats of looking across disciplinary boundaries appears in a recent book review by Ruth Scodel:

It is a good idea for classicists, every once in a while, to read treatments of their texts by smart people who are not classicists, usually colleagues in related fields. They can profit in two very different, indeed opposite, ways: first, sometimes the comparative outsider, with a fresh perspective, can offer insights, solutions to problems, or methods of approach that the community of specialists has missed because it can be very hard to go beyond the questions that have already been defined and endlessly discussed. Second, such books can reveal how the field looks to its neighbors . . . So we sometimes find out that our scholarly neighbors are out of touch with developments in classics, and maybe are encouraged to inform them better. There is always a danger, though, that we can turn ourselves into scholarly police, patrolling our boundaries and looking for mistakes on which to pounce.³

Scodel is not here referring to Reception Studies *per se* but her points are nonetheless germane: as classicists and non-classicists begin to approach the same material from different perspectives, so an awareness of developments in related fields is required if we are to arrive at a better understanding of the relationship between, for instance, text and musical reception, text and translation, classical and post-classical author – to use just a few of the examples from this volume.

This collection, which is deliberately drawn from a broad disciplinary background, provides an uncommon opportunity to see experts in different fields join their perspective on classical reception to that of trained classicists. In addition to Classics, the contributors are experts in, and work within departments of, English, Italian and Art History; the original conference featured other contributions from specialists in English and Comparative Literature as well. One of the vital consequences of this diversity and interdisciplinarity is that these scholars are not operating under the same assumptions – perhaps even the shadow – of Reception Studies as seen from within Classics, nor do they face the same institutional pressures to interpret the classical text in its own right or in its own terms. A beneficial corollary of this broad expertise is a chance for readers of this volume in various disciplines to assess Charles Martindale's rigorous historicist demand that classicists' work on reception be satisfactory not just to classicists but also to post-classical scholars working in the relevant

³ Scodel, Review of Johnstone, *Listening to the Logos*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

3

field, and (we hope to add) vice versa.⁴ A viewpoint oscillating between antiquity and other periods allows us to consider not only how the classics can illuminate other periods, but also how the reception of antiquity can teach us more about the ancient world itself.

In effect, interdisciplinary collaborations help us to conceptualize the (albeit fluid) line between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, and to see how different institutional practices lead to different scholarly practices. In the firm belief that these questions are often best answered with recourse to practical examples as well as theoretical debate, the contributors were given maximum leeway in their choice of topics; hence the broad range of subjects and genres covered in these proceedings. However, the canonical Latin literary tradition and its subsequent reception, along an axis running from antiquity through the early modern humanistic traditions following Petrarch and up to the scholarly and artistic responses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, forms the backbone of the collection. In this, we hope, the volume may offer a useful complement to the considerable attention paid by reception scholars to Greek literature and culture, and especially to its reception in the performing arts.⁵ For although Latin has been somewhat neglected in the most recent articulations of reception as a scholarly discourse, it has had a fundamental role in the development of the humanistic and classical traditions. The recent scholarly focus on the eighteenth century and following may reflect the privileging of Greek in those periods, while a view of reception that begins earlier in history will be more open to the importance of Latin, the lingua franca of the humanist world.⁶ What we perhaps miss in the current interest in classics

⁴ Martindale, "Introduction," pp. 1ff. Cf. Porter, "Reception studies," pp. 478–9.

⁵ Here the work of the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) has had a significant impact, not only in the creation of a large and expanding database of information about performances of Greek and Roman drama, but also in the many volumes of essays produced under its auspices. An accidental consequence of the success of the APGRD is the proportionally greater attention given to the reception of Greek tragedy in particular (though Roman drama does feature in many of the collections). The dominance of the reception of Greek also follows from the Romantic and modern fascination with archaic poetry, which has generated its own rich study, e.g., Graziosi and Greenwood (eds.), *Homer in the Twentieth Century*; Most, Norman, and Rabau (eds.), *Révolutions Homériques*; Greene (ed.), *Re-reading Sappho*; Prins, *Victorian Sappho*. Finally, the influence of ancient Greek thought on modern literary, cultural, and political theory has formed yet another area of reception scholarship. See, e.g., Leonard, *Athens in Paris*, Miller, *Postmodern Spiritual Practices*. Among the Latin exceptions to the current Hellenocentricity is Julia Gaisser's award-winning book, *The Fortunes of Apuleius and the Golden Ass*, on the reception of Apuleius, part of which was presented as a paper at our original conference.

⁶ For the privileging of Greek in the Romantic period and following see Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature*, pp. 15–33. But a stronger narrative of Latin's reception need not be confined to the pre-Romantic period, as the essays of Farrell and Thomas in this volume clearly demonstrate (cf. the work of Theodore Ziolkowski, in particular *Virgil and the Moderns* and *Ovid and the Moderns*). In

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)

4 W. BROCKLISS, P. CHAUDHURI, A. HAIMSON LUSHKOV, K. WASDIN

and empire, colonialism and national traditions is the *longue durée* of classical reception and its continuities and disjunctions over time. In this volume those continuities and disjunctions are particularly focused on the themes of philology, modes of transmission, and self-fashioning.

Another distinctive feature of this volume, therefore, is its focus on treating classical reception in the early modern period. That common choice of focus goes hand in hand with a strong Yale connection, with almost half of the contributors (and several more participants at the original conference) receiving their training or currently teaching at Yale. This particular concentration is in no small part the legacy of Thomas Greene, whose work at Yale over the latter half of the twentieth century shaped our collective understanding of the imitative and competitive relationship between classical and Renaissance literature.⁷ During the very same period, Yale was also the home of the most exciting developments in literary theory, led by scholars in the departments of English and Comparative Literature, such as Harold Bloom and Paul de Man. From this twin inheritance of humanistic erudition and critical originality, Yale built a tradition of scholarship that revitalized our understanding of how early modern writers perceived their own age and literary practices as they confronted the powerful yet fragmented traces of classical culture. In a way, the birth of Reception Studies within the discipline of Classics, which can be identified with the publication of Martindale's *Redeeming the Text* in 1993, may be seen not as an outgrowth of Reception Theory or *Rezeptionsgeschichte* but rather as an importation of what had been going on in Renaissance literary scholarship for some time.⁸

If this interdisciplinary connection with Early Modern Studies has been somewhat obscured over the last twenty years, the change merits some explanation. As Constanze Güthenke has recently suggested in a review article of the field, it is high time to scrutinize the history of Reception Studies itself.⁹ Martindale's own preface to *Redeeming the Text* cites the influences

fact, Latin has often provided the medium through which ancient Greek culture and language were understood, whether because of the unavailability of texts in the time of Petrarch or the exclusivity of Greek instruction in the time of Joyce (on which see the papers of Mazzotta and Farrell).

⁷ Most famously *The Descent from Heaven* and *The Light in Troy*.

⁸ There was, of course, a tradition of scholarship on classical reception from long before 1993 (the work of Gilbert Highet and Richard Jenkyns, to name but two, quite different, examples), but *Redeeming the Text* marked a new engagement, within Classics at least, between literary history and theory, an engagement that would be central to the rapid growth of the field of Reception Studies.

⁹ Güthenke, "Shop talk," p. 113: "But just as much as acts of reception need to be contextualized and historicized, so do the theoretical approaches that have inspired Reception Studies in the field of Classics, and that privilege that sense of empathy and the lingering dream of immediacy as an approach to the past."

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

5

of New Criticism, Derridean deconstruction, Bakhtin, Gadamer, and T. S. Eliot but omits mention of his own earlier work on the classicism of Milton and Shakespeare.¹⁰ And yet, those earlier studies, and their roots in the work of, amongst others, Thomas Greene, were never characterized by the uncritical cataloguing of sources and fixed interpretations from which the modern reception theorist might retreat in embarrassment.¹¹ On the contrary, as the papers by Mazzotta and Braden in this volume clearly show, the dynamism of the early modern engagement with the past – its deference and competitiveness, its sense of temporal continuity and disjunction, its immersion in multiple sources and the mysteries generated by fragments and historical traces – shares much with our current interests in the ancient world, whether in the connection between Rome and its early history, or between Flavian culture and its Julio-Claudian antecedents, or in the retrospectives of late antique scholarship. Nevertheless, it may have served the burgeoning field of Reception Studies well to mark a break, even if only rhetorically and temporarily, from the “Classical Tradition” (as conventionally conceived) and the familiar complementarity of Greco-Roman antiquity and the humanist High Renaissance. The opening-up of new vistas now populated with studies of modern literature, performance, and film rightly demanded a polemicism and proreptic to theory appropriate to the 1990s. In our current, perhaps more ecumenical, climate we may be in a better position to reflect on the history of scholarship with attention to all of its strands.

Güthenke’s consideration of how traditional forms of scholarship – including historiographies of the discipline – can be reconstituted in light of Reception Studies extends to that most traditional of classical disciplines, philology: “What then can philology, especially philology of a past language, as a specific practice beyond philology at large add to the category of scholarship on scholarship?”¹² Her illustration of the convergence between philology and Reception Studies is Sean Gurd’s recent book on the textual criticism of Euripides’ *Iphigeneia at Aulis*.¹³ We would expand that paradigmatic example of philology to include a range of technical and interpretive activities concerned with the history and forms of texts and language itself. Where Güthenke sees Reception Studies at work in Gurd’s

¹⁰ Martindale, *Redeeming the Text*, pp. xiii–xiv. Martindale’s continued work on Renaissance texts feeds into this volume via Gordon Braden’s paper.

¹¹ But for his final illness Greene would have contributed to Martindale’s *Shakespeare and the Classics*, co-edited with A. B. Taylor, a contribution that would have increased awareness of Greene’s work among classicists.

¹² Güthenke, “Shop talk,” p. 110. ¹³ Gurd, *Iphigeneias at Aulis*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)

6 W. BROCKLISS, P. CHAUDHURI, A. HAIMSON LUSHKOV, K. WASDIN

historiography of textual critical practices, we see the same attention to the local motivations and resources for reading classical texts in Zetzel's history of Ciceronian textual criticism, Kaster's cultural contextualization of ancient commentary, Tarrant's explication of the transference of Horace's words into music, and Farrell's demonstration of how Joyce's philological knowledge fed back into creative and imaginative expression. In each of these cases a species of philological expertise is brought into productive engagement with a historicized view of the conditions under which the ancient text or language is read or interpreted. No longer, in that light, can there be any false dichotomy between philology and history as two alternative modes of approaching a text.

At the conclusion of her seminal work on the early modern and modern history of the Latin language, Françoise Waquet argues that the future of the study of Latin as a going concern depends on a very specific intellectual project: she advocates the study of Latin for the purpose of reading untranslated, documentary texts in order to better understand European history.¹⁴ This is undoubtedly a promising field for further research but it suggests a circumscribed view of the value of the ancient languages. That value is perhaps better represented through the lens of reception. As Wilson's essay in this volume on the Scottish reception of Vergil shows – in the same vein as Andrew Laird's work on Vergil in early modern Central America – history, both European and global, is illuminated by a knowledge not only of the language of the texts themselves but also of the local contexts in which Greco-Roman culture, such as Vergilian poetry, is read, learned, interpreted, appropriated, and disseminated.¹⁵ Especially where literary texts are concerned, Reception Studies functions as an argument for acquiring the philological expertise to see how the relations between texts produce meanings at even the most microscopic of levels.¹⁶ Philology and Reception Studies thus together contribute to a history that is not confined to the European and the documentary. Wherever the classical languages have been read or translated one must apply a philological scrutiny to questions of who reads, how, and why. We hope that the diverse papers presented here inaugurate a new fusion of philological with Reception Studies.

¹⁴ Waquet, *Latin or the Empire of a Sign*, p. 274. For an alternative argument concerning the future of the study of Latin in relation to the history of the language see Leonhardt, *Latein*.

¹⁵ Laird's work is well represented by *The Epic of America*, but see also a number of his recent articles. For a similarly historicist approach to the local contexts of reception (from outside Classics), cf. the work of Craig Kallendorf, notably *The Virgilian Tradition* and *The Other Virgil*.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Wilson's acute reading of Douglas' aims in his translation of the *Aeneid* through close comparison with Vergil's Latin.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

7

The publication of such a collection under the auspices of the Classics Department at Yale not only marks a reconnection with the tradition of Renaissance studies at the university but also sets a wider example for the revitalization of what was once called the “Classical Tradition.”¹⁷ Where once that phrase connoted the transhistorical conversations of supposedly like-minded European males, it can now be recuperated as a growing body of texts and ideas whose analysis, contestation, appropriation, understanding and misunderstanding shaped European cultural history and thereby our modern habits of thought and interpretation.¹⁸ It is with this history in mind that we present this volume. Given the high stock of Reception Studies today and a climate that lends itself to interdisciplinary enterprises, it seems an appropriate moment to sit scholars of antiquity and post-antiquity side-by-side to see how they approach the classical tradition and to identify avenues for further exploration.

PRACTICING RECEPTION: ORGANIZATION
AND THEMES

As a snapshot of various types of engagement in Reception Studies in the early years of the twenty-first century, this volume is organized into two sections, focusing on: 1. transmission, philology and the broader cultural movements that should bear on our understanding of texts and language;¹⁹ 2. self-fashioning, or individuals’ use of the classics to project an image of

¹⁷ On the concept of the classical tradition and its potential pliability see Budelmann and Haubold, “Reception and tradition.” Martindale, “Reception,” p. 298, discusses the terminological nuances of “tradition,” “reception,” and other related keywords; he acknowledges that any definitional boundaries must take account of variation in usage from one author to another (citing, as an example, T. S. Eliot’s use of “tradition” in the influential essay, “Tradition and the individual talent”). Carlo Caruso and Andrew Laird offer trenchant criticism of any supposed dichotomy between reception and tradition (“The Italian classical tradition, language and literary history,” pp. 2–3): “The distinction between reception and tradition does not survive close scrutiny. During the Renaissance, just as much as in any later period, perennial controversies about the virtues of Ciceronianism or the superiority of Homer to Virgil show that the very nature of the classical world and its legacies was regularly contested.”

¹⁸ Recent work in Reception Studies has stretched beyond European confines, e.g., Cook and Tatum, *African American Writers and Classical Tradition*, duBois, *Out of Athens*, Goff (ed.), *Classics and Colonialism*, Greenwood, *Afro-Greeks*; but common to all receptions, irrespective of place and time, is a measure of creative response, assertion of authority, and intellectual continuity and difference – this new and more dynamic sense of the classical tradition is exemplified both by the kinds of study listed above and equally by the papers in this volume.

¹⁹ Cf. Porter, “Reception studies,” p. 473: “In fact, transmission and reception are not two faces of a single coin. Rather, they are two names for the selfsame activity. Classical studies are not merely the beneficiary of this activity. They are *subsumed* by it.”

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)

8 W. BROCKLISS, P. CHAUDHURI, A. HAIMSON LUSHKOV, K. WASDIN

themselves.²⁰ These divisions are based on the differing modes of reception of classical texts, rather than any unifying and underlying theoretical framework in the modern scholarship. Some of our contributors, such as Kaster, work backwards, seeking to identify the meaning that was once attributed to a text; others, such as Zetzler and Tarrant, explore facets of the later culture and its modes of reception; while others still, for instance Thomas, bring out a dialogue between two points.²¹

All the papers in this volume explore the interplay between philological approaches to classical texts and the historicist discourse of Reception Studies.²² While these two approaches have often appeared to be at loggerheads with one another, we hope that our volume will help to move their relationship in the direction of productive dialogue in place of mutual antagonism.²³ In general, the papers share a combined attention to the artist, to the artwork *qua* work of *art*, and to the cultural context of production and reception. This kind of criticism rejects the dichotomy constructed by partisans of a cultural studies or aesthetic approach to reception.²⁴ A mark of the reconciliation between philology and culture can be seen in the fact that the papers often raise issues treated at greater

²⁰ The choice of the term “self-fashioning” itself acknowledges a connection to Early Modern Studies, in particular the formative work of Stephen Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. This vein of work has been internalized in literary criticism for some time now, and has made itself felt in Classics with particular reference to Cicero. See Connolly, review of Dugan, *Making a New Man*, esp. nn. 2 and 3.

²¹ For a sense of the variety of approaches available – in terms of theories of interpretation and their application to different kinds of objects – see Batstone, “Provocation,” Hall, “Towards a theory of performance reception,” Hardwick and Stray, “Introduction,” Paul, “Working with film,” and Porter, “Reception studies.”

²² Sheldon Pollock (“Future philology?”, p. 934) offers a suggestive definition of philology: “the critical self-reflection of language.” The prefix *philo-*, then, would imply not only a love of language (*lógos*), but an (informed) self-love. That inward-looking aspect of the study of language is shared by the textual critic, commentator and translator, whose practices are explored below. Pollock argues that, at its best, the discipline has always been aware of both its own historicity and that of its objects of study. For an alternative definition of philology, wider than that followed by Pollock and this introduction, cf. Geoffrey Harpham, “Roots, races, and the return to philology,” who argues that, in addition to close linguistic analysis, philology has always been characterized by concerns with meaning, value and cultural identity.

²³ For an attempt to reconcile traditional philology and historicizing theory, cf. Harrison (ed.), *Texts, Ideas and the Classics*. In his general introduction, Stephen Harrison calls for “mutual tolerance and understanding, in the cause of mutual interest and enrichment” between practitioners of “conventional classical scholarship and modern theoretical ideas” (pp. 1–2). (Later in the same volume, however, Michael Reeve (“Reception/history of scholarship”) arrives at a rather more pessimistic evaluation of the chances that traditional philologists and scholars of reception might find enough common ground to work together.) For the latest discussion of some of these issues see the essays in Gurd (ed.), *Philology and Its Histories*, which appeared too recently to be considered here.

²⁴ See, for instance, the recent debate between Simon Goldhill and Charles Martindale (Goldhill, “Cultural history and aesthetics” and Martindale, “Performance, reception, aesthetics”).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

9

length in the other of the two main sections. So, for example, Farrell's essay in the first part is as much about Joyce's self-fashioning as philology and Wilson's piece in the second is as much about transmission and language as Douglas' identity. Also running through both sections is the strong fascination with the (discovered) text as a physical and powerful token of antiquity, a topic covered by Zetzel, Mazzotta, and Braden.²⁵

As a rule, scholars applying reception theory to classical texts remain very much in need of the tools of traditional philology, but are able to use those tools for new, historicizing purposes. Each new modern edition of a text, for instance, adds a new voice to the continuing dialogue, expressing, with a greater or lesser degree of boldness, the particular viewpoint and interests of its editor.²⁶ In this volume, James Zetzel's study of the nineteenth-century rediscovery of Cicero's *De re publica* gives a clear demonstration of the potential for tendentiousness in the professedly disinterested logic of textual criticism. Cardinal Angelo Mai, keeper of the Vatican Library, attempted to appropriate the new text for a new Rome and new Italy established by Pope Pius VII after the defeat of Napoleon. He entered into a war of words with another textual critic present in Rome, the classical scholar and historian Barthold Niebuhr, who wished to assist in and thus exercise control over the editing of the new text. Niebuhr was the representative at the Vatican of Prussia, another state resurgent after the fall of Napoleon, and was eager to appropriate the text for Prussian monarchical doctrine. Zetzel shows that such scholarship is shaped by the ideologies of politics and religion, and that *Realpolitik* can determine the uses textual critics make of the texts and objects they study.²⁷

Robert Kaster explores another of the traditional remits of the philologist, the commentary. He examines Servius' commentary on the *Aeneid*, focusing on his formulation of Vergil's *intentio*: to praise Augustus by praising his ancestors. Modern scholars have derided Servius' reading as naïve and reductive, but, Kaster argues, we should show due sensitivity to

²⁵ For the changing perception of tokens of antiquity – from texts to images to monuments – during the early modern period, see now Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* and Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction*.

²⁶ On the interestedness of the textual critic, cf. Harrison's comments in *Texts, Ideas and the Classics*, pp. 3ff.

²⁷ Zetzel's contribution makes for an original and powerful instantiation of the claim Güthenke attributes to James Porter: "Porter will come around to recommend the history of scholarship as a promising field of future reception studies" ("Shop talk," p. 104). Cf. Porter, "Reception studies," p. 475. In historicizing the circumstances of the philology of the *De re publica*, Zetzel also picks up the gauntlet laid down by Sheldon Pollock for all philologists: "A double historicization is required, that of the philologist – and we philologists historicize ourselves as rarely as physicians heal themselves – no less than that of the text" (Pollock, "Future philology?," p. 958).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76432-2 - Reception and the Classics: Yale Classical Studies: Volume XXXVI

Edited for the Department of Classics by William Brockliss, Pramit Chaudhuri,

Ayelet Haimson Lushkov and Katherine Wasdin

Excerpt

[More information](#)

IO W. BROCKLISS, P. CHAUDHURI, A. HAIMSON LUSHKOV, K. WASDIN

the world in which Servius wrote: he and his pupils lived in an honour culture, where to praise or denigrate a possession or relative of X was to praise or denigrate X her- or (especially) himself. Kaster shows that Servius, through his awareness of the potential for seemingly value-neutral statements to convey praise or blame, is able to point up interesting possible meanings for a number of passages. Although his cultural assumptions and the readings motivated by those assumptions are alien to scholars in the modern West, they may have been rather less alien to readers and audiences of Vergil's own time. Philologists have tended to mine Servius' commentary for nuggets of "truth" accidentally preserved behind the screen of his naïveté; rather than dissecting his text in this manner, we would be better advised to regard Servius as a fellow reader of the *Aeneid*, and as a reader with privileged access to meanings from which we would otherwise be excluded. Kaster's paper exemplifies how a traditional philological resource like an ancient commentary, when viewed from the perspective of Reception Studies, allows for a better understanding both of the "secondary" source itself and the "primary" text it seeks to elucidate – a relationship James Porter has described as "the remnants of an unbroken conversation that was carried on throughout antiquity."²⁸ On this view, both texts are in a sense primary as we pay equal attention to the conditions in which the two texts were composed and the impact of those conditions on meaning. Philologists preparing their own commentaries, rather than presenting themselves as the discoverers of objective truths "hidden" within the texts, should be aware of the historical contingency of their inferences, and might do well to declare their own hermeneutic stance as unequivocally as Servius.²⁹

Joseph Farrell's essay demonstrates how James Joyce was able to reanimate even the dry, context-free philological practice of grammatical analysis. The author of *Ulysses* found a "use for Latinity" in the collision between the abstract, ahistorical logic of traditional classroom grammar drills and the most intimate thoughts of his *alter ego*, the schoolmaster Stephen Dedalus. Joyce satirized the detachment of the practice of "parsing" from

²⁸ Porter, "Reception studies," p. 473; see also pp. 475–6. Cf. Güthenke, "Shop talk," p. 109.

²⁹ Cf. Harrison (ed.), *Text, Ideas and the Classics*, p. 8: "It is surely better for an interpreter to declare his or her underlying viewpoint rather than to leave it to be constructed from what he or she writes or says in an apparently neutral manner." See also Charles Martindale's comments on the undeclared cultural assumptions behind Adam Parry's reading of the *Aeneid* in "The two voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*" (Martindale, *Redeeming the Text*, pp. 40–3). Modern scholars' perception of Servius' naïveté may arise not merely from the nature of his reading, but in part from the fact that he makes his opinion so clear. It is generally considered bad manners for a modern commentator's voice to obtrude too obviously (cf. Kraus, "Introduction," esp. pp. 4–7).